



M O N T A N A
COALITION AGAINST
DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL
V I O L E N C E

March 22nd, 2011

To: Senate Finance and Claims Committee

From: Kelsen Young, Executive Director

Re: HB 230 – Transfer Board of Crime Control to Corrections; Eliminate FTE's

SENATE FINANCE & CLAIMS

Exhibit No. 1

Date 3-22-11

Bill No. HB 230

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Senate Finance and Claims Committee. For the record, my name is Kelsen Young and I am the Executive Director of the Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. We are a statewide membership organization representing direct service programs from across the state that provides services to victims of domestic and sexual violence in your communities. We rise in opposition to HB 230.

You have heard extensive testimony about the impacts of HB 230 on the Montana Board of Crime Control (MBCC) and the entities it funds. I would like to focus my testimony on the impact to victim services providers – specifically victim witness organizations and domestic and sexual violence community-based providers.

Our victim service programs rely almost entirely on federal funding to operate. Any decrease or delay in funding would result in programs shutting down, jobs lost, and victims – especially in rural areas – not receiving vital services. The potential for loss of federal funding if the current structure and autonomy of MBCC does not stay intact is deeply concerning to us and would be for your constituents. I am providing members of the Committee with our 2010 Funding Report which details the funding structure for many of our member programs.

Currently, Montana does not fund victim service programs with general fund dollars. We receive small funds from special revenue accounts that are used to meet the match requirements for federal funding. Otherwise there is NO state funding for victim service programs. As I said, we are completely reliant on federal grants, some community funding, and occasionally a competitive foundation or federal grant.

If HB 230 results in the impacts that the MBCC has portrayed, programs in your community may cease to operate for a period of time. **For instance, many of the victim witness organizations entire budgets are comprised entirely of MBCC funding.** If there is a gap of 2 to 12 months....how are they to survive? They do not have reserve funds and they will not have the ability to maintain staff or services without these federal funds. These are jobs lost in your communities; and ultimately victims of crime will be at a greater risk in your communities.

The debate on HB 230 throughout the House and in the Budget Subcommittee has focused on the cost savings to the State; underlying the discussion has been a focus on whether or not the MBCC is operating efficiently. In addition, the two sides – the sponsor and the MBCC staff – have diametrically opposed information about the impact of HB 230 on funding. Our member programs are tired of the debate and want to focus on a factual resolution. Either there will be an impact, or there won't be – which is it? We have based our testimony today on the evidence provided to us by the MBCC. We have not received similar evidence from the Sponsor or proponents of HB 230. It is incredibly important that this Committee carefully consider the impact of HB 230 on your communities and demand the necessary answers before making such a significant change. Please remember the impact for victims of crime in your communities.

We respectfully request your NO vote on HB 230. If you have questions, I am available to provide further information.

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